



Religion and Preferences: A Decision-theoretic Explanation of Turkey's New Foreign Policy

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Religious beliefs can affect preferences of decision makers who formulate and guide foreign policy. This article investigates the relationship between preferences affected by Islamic worldview of Turkey's new leadership and foreign policy the new elite conduct through two simple models. The models are games against nature; thus, Turkey is the only decision maker facing no strategic uncertainty. It is found that the subjective estimates of achieving gains under the new foreign policy (NWP) and the old foreign policy (SQP) are critical and distinct from gains and costs of both policies. The new Turkish foreign policy (NWP) is a reversible move, even though Turkish decision makers evaluate it as generating a higher gain and a lower cost compared with the preservation of the status quo (SQP). The implementation of the NWP does not only depend on its gain but also on how attractive is the SQP.

Turkish foreign policy nowadays attracts analysts' attention worldwide. Deteriorated Israel–Turkey relations and especially the recent crisis of aid flotilla to Gaza prompt many scholars to question whether Turkey, a NATO member and an ally of Israel, now completed its re-alignment moves by spectacularly siding with Iran, Syria, and even Hamas.¹ If true, the new foreign-policy orientation of Turkey would dramatically tilt balances of power by isolating Israel and putting the United States in a complex, difficult situation in the Middle East.

We totally agree that “what happens in the Middle East will not stay in the Middle East; from terrorism to nuclear proliferation to energy security, managing contemporary global challenges requires managing the Middle East” (Haass and Indyk 2009). In addition, the Middle East is the region that demonstrates how Islam makes an impact upon international relations through its transnational character (Thomas 2000). The shift in Turkish foreign-policy orientation therefore requires close scrutiny.

How could the re-orientation of Turkish foreign policy be explained? An explanation could draw upon profound changes in international security environment after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The structural change of the international system such as new interactions conducive to different foreign-policy priorities at global level could have prompted the shift. However, there is a time lag of more than two decades between the new Turkish foreign policy

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¹ Israel–Turkey relations rapidly worsened after Israeli Special Forces intercepted on May 31 an aid flotilla that departed from Istanbul. The organizers of the aid program insist that their aim was only to break Israeli blockade of Gaza while Israel argues that terrorists were present among the activists.

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(abbreviated as the NWP from here on) and the emergence of unipolarity. The NWP should not take that long to emerge. Therefore, this study proposes a domestic-politics explanation of the NWP by justifying changes in Turkish preferences and using an expected-utility framework.

The conduct of the NWP and, the alternative to the NWP, namely, Turkish traditional foreign policy primarily aiming at the preservation of the status quo (abbreviated as the SQP from now on) are assumed to depend upon payoff parameters and subjective estimations of achieving gains under costs. It is found that current Turkish leaders will not shift back to the SQP provided that the SQP loss exceeds the cost of the NWP. The result holds even if the leaders are certain that the NWP will not benefit Turkey. If the leaders subjectively evaluate that the SQP can still be beneficial but the likelihood is low, or the likelihood of NWP gain is sufficiently high, there is no return to the SQP. However, if the loss under the SQP is smaller than the cost of the NWP, then Turkish leaders can revert to the SQP. The reversal from the NWP to the SQP can also occur if the probability of NWP gain is sufficiently small.

The remainder of the article is divided into six parts. The first indicates that religions have an impact upon international relations by highlighting connections among religious ideas and beliefs. The second discusses how rational-choice models, liberal, and constructivist frameworks treat preferences and demonstrates how religious ideas and beliefs can shape preferences. The third presents the ideological heritage of the AKP (Turkish acronym for the Justice and Development Party) leadership. The fourth section presents two game models to investigate conditions inducing the NWP or the SQP. The fifth one discusses findings. The sixth one concludes. The appendix contains formal models and deductions.

Religions, Ideas, and Beliefs

Dramatic moments in human history greatly shaped international relations (IR) theories. The oil crisis of 1973, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and al Qaeda's terrorist attacks of 9/11 were devastating shocks to the international system. The first underlined the importance of transnational and international organizations in global politics and brought economic aspects of international relations to the foreground. The second prompted progressive strengthening of constructivist analyses vis-à-vis realist theories by revealing the weight of social constructions in international politics. As to the third, it indicated the prominent influence of religion in global affairs.

Religion was theoretically and empirically overlooked in international politics since the end of the Wars of Religion in Europe and the Westphalian Order. The general expectation was that religion is bound to lose its weight in international relations, as modernization processes accelerate at global level, such as the personalization of religion and the separation between religious and political spheres (Esposito and Voll 2003). Nowadays, several studies international politics draw attention to the impact of religion upon international politics (Huntington 1993; Dark 2000a,b; Philpott 2000; Abrams 2001; Fox 2002, 2004; Petito and Hatzopoulos 2003; Thomas 2005; Gill 2007; Hurd 2008).² Some possible reasons of the revival of religion span crises of modernity, failures of modernizing secular state to produce both democracy and development in the Third World, and Third World revolts against the West (Thomas 2003).

Religions are not variables but constitute systems of transnational ideas and belief systems. They generate fundamental sources of identity and differentiation among groups (Thomas 2000). Religious values, ideas, and beliefs indicate states'

² Eisenstadt (2000) argues that religion and IR is well studied but foreign policy under religion not.

positions in the transnational social context (Allbright 2006). Thus, at system level, religions occupy a central position within social structures shaping states' understandings and perceptions of how the world works.

At individual level, state leaders and decision makers can ascribe meanings to reality by assessing foreign policy through their religious lenses. The evaluations of decision makers can accordingly vary depending upon subjective interpretations. Goldstein and Keohane (1993) indeed note that ideas span beliefs and worldviews, criteria for distinguishing right from wrong, just from unjust. Thus, in essence, religions can serve the same function as ideas by influencing decision makers' representations of foreign-policy contexts and national interests.

To illustrate, Iranian foreign policy toward Israel and the United States, conflicts between Israel and its neighbors in the Middle East, Hindu–Moslem conflicts in India, Moslem extremists' activities in Philippines, massacres of Bosnians by Serbs and Croats, to name a few, are largely fomented by religious beliefs. The US foreign policy during George W. Bush era had strong links with Christian values. The religion was then an important determinant of American leaders' ideas about international events, culture, and their place in the world (Judis 2005; Mead 2006). George W. Bush and his administration members believed that the United States is the “chosen nation” having the mission of transforming the world to spread freedom and that the United States remains as the symbol of good forces over evil ones that include transnational terrorism. Accordingly, the invasion of Iraq can be explained through various American motives such as George W. Bush's perceptions of Saddam Hussein as evil (Judis 2005). The opposition of France and Germany (and some other European Union members) to Turkey's full EU membership constitutes another example of subjectivity partly generated by religion. Being populated largely by Muslims, it is argued that Turkey's position within the European social context constitutes the major impediment to the country's accession (Giscard d'Estaing 2002; see also Marranci 2004). Current Turkish leaders' pious religious beliefs and interpretations of Israel's Gaza blockade as the oppression of fellow Moslem brothers by Jews constitute yet another example.

Consequently, religion is not in retreat in contemporary international politics (Philpott 2002). Decision makers can identify causes of global problems, allies, enemies, and divine orders to be established for the sake of the humanity through their religious worldviews. The United States is the great Satan for Iranian leaders and still for many others. Islamist extremists have different opinions about Moslem countries cooperating with the United States and those that oppose the United States. Moslem foreign-policy makers' perceptions and images of European states and the United States as exploiters and enemies of Islam can be directly or indirectly linked to religious motives. In this sense, religions function as subjective divisions and sources of identity and differentiation between communities. The rhetoric of “us and them” is visible in religious attitudes. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism produce similar motives for opposition against some ways of life and legitimize actions.³ To sum up, religions can safely be argued to affect state leaders and decision makers' assessments of global politics and preferences over national interests.

Preferences and Religion

Individual preferences are bases for social explanations of choices. Bowles (1998) lists beliefs, cultural traits, learning, implied psychological dispositions, capacities, and ideas of decision makers as factors shaping preferences and

³ The recent Swiss referendum that resulted in popular rejection of building of minarets in Switzerland is quite illustrative in this respect.

actions. As to preferences in international politics, three major currents of IR theory deal with the subject: liberalism, constructivism, and rationalism.

Moravcsik (1997) argues that preferences are sources of foreign-policy explanations. He proposes ideational, commercial, and republican variants of liberalism to assess states' preferences. The ideational variant studies "social identity" that "comprises the set of fundamental societal preferences concerning the scope of the "nation," which in turn suggest the legitimate location of national borders and the allocation of citizenship rights. The roots of national identity may reflect a shared set of linguistic, cultural, or *religious identifications* or a shared set of historical experiences" (Moravcsik 1997, 326. *Emphasis added*).

Constructivist approaches emphasize social elements in preferences. Not only material conditions (such as military and economic resources) but also social structures, that is, practices, shared knowledge, and intersubjective understandings, shape preferences (Wendt 1987, 1992, 1994, 1999; Finnemore 1996). These social elements include discursive processes among states' decision makers (Weldes 1996). Religious beliefs and values can then legitimize preferences for cooperation with particular societies (Wildavsky 1987). Intersubjective religious values and dynamic discursive processes can shape preferences and foreign-policy choices.

Thus, it should not be surprising to witness that the AKP elite have a favorable view toward states whose populations in majority embrace Islam and historically related to Turkey. Turkey's relations with these states would constitute an anarchy on its own. To wit, Israeli missiles would have a different meaning than Pakistani missiles for the current Turkish government similar to British missiles having a different meaning for the United States than do Soviet missiles (Wendt 1992).

Do rationalist arguments exclude non-material factors from the formation of preferences? Thomas (2005) argues that rationalist assumptions limit the role of ideational factors such as ideas, ideals, passions, aspirations, ideologies, belief systems, norms, and collective identities. Similar to Thomas (2005), Kubálková claims: "to Positivists, religion stands in sharp contrast to reason, and is not to be taken seriously. Religion is either a "private affair of individuals," a domestic issue of states, or it is liminal; in any event it eludes the territorial boundaries characteristic of state-centric IR studies. The mainstream or, soft, constructivists are prepared to consider ideas, including religious ideas, and changing identities and state interests but subordinate them to the rational-choice theory. Within these positivist, materialist, and state-centric constraints, the mainstream by definition cannot theorize religion in IR" (Kubálková 2003, 81. *Emphasis in original*).

It is true that some rational-choice models take preferences as exogenously given. In economics, for example, gains and costs are generally expressed in function of money. The outcomes producing higher gains at lower costs are preferred over those that produce lower gains but higher costs (Wildavsky 1987). The rational choice is then the action that maximizes expected payoff. Similarly, game theory takes players' preferences as given (Powell 1994, 318; Fearon and Wendt 2002; Wendt 1987, 369). The task of the theory is to solve given games; it does not have to explain why players hold specific preferences.⁴ Thus, a game solution consists of actions that are derived from assumed preferences over outcomes of interactions. Yet the task of a game theorist who has to use the theory as a tool to explain empirical choices is threefold: justify and explain preferences, derive preferences over actions and therefore choices, and compare these choices with observed actions. It is more intricate to assess that an empirical interaction in fact corresponds to a theoretical game.

⁴ Utility functions represent players' preferences; however, "utility theory is not a part of game theory" (Luce and Raiffa 1957, 12).

Fearon and Wendt indeed remark that “Rationalist explanations are a species of intentional explanation, the basic structure of which is the formula, ‘Desire + Belief = Action.’ This means that at their core—the level of individual choice—ideas are an essential, not just secondary, element of rationalist explanations.” Therefore, rationalist explanations do not preclude the impact of non-material forces upon preference formation. Actions follow desires and beliefs in both approaches (Fearon and Wendt 2002, 59; see also Barkin 2003, 336–339).

Finally, Finnemore (1996) notes that constructivist, liberal, and realist theories complement each other. Preferences have not only material but also ideational sources and can be assumed to be generated by the social context. Foreign-policy decisions can have both material and non-material supports including worldviews and perceptions sifted through religious beliefs (Fox 2001, 59). The assumption of rationality “leaves room for meaning and significance” (Wuthnow 1991, 11). Hence, it is possible to use religion’s impact upon preferences in investigating foreign-policy choices instrumental rationality implies.

The New Leadership of Turkey

The AKP won Turkish elections of November 2002 and formed the government needing no coalition partner.⁵ Turkish foreign activities subsequently gained a momentum. In fact, Ahmet Davutoğlu, appointed as the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 1, 2009, and the chief foreign-policy advisor of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (the Turkish Prime Minister and the leader of the AKP), is the prime architect of the momentum since 2003.⁶

Davutoğlu believes that Turkey’s history, geopolitical position, cultural affinities, and ties can help foreign-policy makers in the Middle East and the Balkans to recognize their countries’ connectedness with each other and Turkey. Turkey is differentiated from other Islamic states with its peculiar history and Turkish-speaking minorities around the world, especially in Europe.⁷ He qualifies the connectedness as Turkey’s “strategic depth” (Davutoğlu 2001, 2008). Hence, the strategic depth should greatly ease resolution of conflicts in these regions by demonstrating that territorial borders are in fact artificial separators of closely related or connected peoples. Any Turkish foreign policy not tapping into the strategic depth means a poor use of Turkey’s diplomatic weight emanating from Turkey’s imperial history and geopolitical position.

In general, the ideology of the AKP elite including Davutoğlu is primarily rooted in “Millî Görüş” (National Outlook) that envisions Turkey as a state that does not depend on foreign technology and industrial advances and as the leader of the Moslem world, perhaps the leader of an Islamic Commonwealth. The AKP “is an offspring of the National Outlook tradition” (Yıldız 2008, 56). An array of political parties have represented the ideology but were all banned from political activities aiming to weaken or to destroy secular structure of the Turkish Republic (Çınar and Duran 2008, 28–30).⁸ The leaders of the AKP are pragmatic and careful, however. They learn to adapt to realities of domestic politics by avoiding mistakes other Islam-friendly parties committed such as efforts perceived as targeting secular bases of the Republic and by carefully managing the weight of Turkish Armed Forces upon the country’s democracy (Cizre 2008). As a result, the AKP remains the only Islam-friendly party that is not banned from

⁵ Larrabee (2007) argues that a new type of elite sometimes qualified as neo-Ottomans then took power.

⁶ Ahmet Davutoğlu is a former academician and author of several books including now famous *Stratejik Derinlik*, that is, *Strategic Depth* published in 2001. The book exposes Davutoğlu’s strategic vision à la Brzezinski (1997). It blends Turkey’s geopolitical environment with Turkey’s cultural and historical legacy especially in Eurasia and the Middle East discussing creation of new policies with rich implications for these regions.

⁷ Nettl (1968) argues that states are “sociocultural” phenomena.

⁸ Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party) currently embraces the ideology.

Turkish politics. Yıldız (2008) notes that former leaders of the National Outlook movement criticize the AKP leadership as having nothing to do with the ideology. Indeed, the elite of the party do not perceive Western democracies and values as corrupt and do not reject global diversity and multiculturalism (Ayata 2004; Öniş 2009). It is therefore natural to witness that the AKP does not raise objections against Turkey's EU membership.

The AKP leaders are eager to break up with the SQP. The previous foreign-policy orientation was centered on keeping always some distance with respect to conflicts in the Middle East or Balkans; previous governments tried not to take risks in issues of those regions. The NWP is in contrast active as demonstrated by Ankara's hosting of Hamas leader after his electoral victory, opening diplomatic posts in Latin America and Africa, spending diplomatic efforts to improve relations with Armenia, keeping warm relations with Iran involved or suspected to be involved in research to produce nuclear weapons, or even with Sudanese leadership accused of genocide in Darfur.⁹ Can the NWP be qualified as an Islamic foreign policy?

Karabell argues that to qualify a foreign policy as Islamic, the policy should serve the brotherhood of Moslems around the globe. It must also oppose Western influences and Zionism (Karabell 1996–1997, 86). The NWP is not a clear-cut case. The NWP does not serve the objective of opposing Western influences; it instead supports dialogue between civilizations, Islam and Christianity. The AKP elite led by Davutoğlu rather believe in a dialogue between civilizations. According to them, Islam is not a barrier dividing people across the globe. It supports the idea of Moslems forming a close-knit community, yet Turkey did not back Moslem Abkhazians but sided with Georgia in the South Ossetia conflict of 2008. The NWP does not either fulfill the criteria of opposition against Zionism. Turkish–Israel relations were rather cooperative until the recent crisis of aid flotilla to Gaza. Hence, it is difficult to qualify the NWP as Islamic on the basis of these three standards.

The impact of Islam upon the NWP is less direct than Karabell's standards imply. The worldview and beliefs of the AKP leadership, especially those of Davutoğlu, do not imply a collision course with the West. Instead, cooperation with the non-Muslim world, the efforts to use Turkey's peculiar history particularly in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus establish and enhance the future position of Turkey in the transnational social context (Davutoğlu 2001, 563). Turkey with its majority of Moslem population can become a major center of attraction and power overtime through its strategic depth. Such an achievement should not constitute a success for only Turkey, but for the whole world of Islam. The optimality of the SQP toward this ideal and aim then becomes questionable. Consequently, the conditions of the shift from the SQP require close scrutiny.

Analysis and Findings

We propose two games to investigate those conditions for implementing the NWP and the SQP.¹⁰ Both games take Turkey as a rational unitary actor.¹¹ It is realistic to take the AKP leadership as a solid group united around the personalities of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ahmet Davutoğlu. Hence, we assume that the AKP elite conducting foreign-policy activities constitute a unified team.¹²

Decision makers conducting foreign policy can face risks, because choices generate prospects of uncertain gains and costs. Hence, we need an assumption to

⁹ Turkey and Brazil, both non-permanent members of UN Security Council, voted against sanctions targeting Iran in June.

¹⁰ Interested readers can consult the appendix for the formal analysis and deductions.

¹¹ These games are called as "games against nature" in the jargon of game theory.

¹² Turkey and the AKP elite are hereafter used interchangeably.

deduce implications of the formal models. The AKP leaders highly value gains from the NWP and insist that the inertia of the SQP is rather harmful for the country (Davutoğlu 2001, 2008). The worldview and beliefs of the AKP leadership are therefore assumed to imply that the NWP gain exceeds the one of the SQP and that the SQP cost is higher than the one of the NWP. The assumption itself does not constitute any sufficient condition for an implementation of the NWP but enables us to evaluate expected benefits of the NWP and the SQP. The benefits of both policies critically depend upon subjective estimates of achieving gains and suffering costs.

We can model the expectations from the SQP and the NWP by proposing that gains and costs occur with some probabilities that constitute decision makers' subjective estimates. The proposition is based upon three pillars. First, gains and costs are distinct from each other. Second, gains and costs exhaustively enumerate the consequences of a decision. Hence, gains and costs occur with likelihoods that sum up to one: higher likelihoods of gains imply lower likelihoods of costs and vice versa. Third, gains and costs are not under decision makers' control.

Game 1

The game 1 presents the SQP as containing no risk unlike the game 2. There are several supports for the assumption. First, the SQP has a long history reflecting a constant orientation. Second, the long history of the SQP implies learned experiences about foreign reactions. The reactions to the SQP are well predicted and evaluated by policymakers. Third, states would rather react to the NWP, that is, they would respond differently to the NWP, not against the SQP. The risks the SQP contains are extremely small compared with those of so-called axial shift. Accordingly, the AKP elite are assumed to evaluate the benefit of the SQP as a constant that could be expressed as the difference between the gain and the cost the SQP generates. The benefit of the NWP is in turn the difference between the NWP gain and the NWP cost each weighted by their respective probabilities.

The game's decision calculus stipulates that if the benefit of the NWP exceeds the one of the SQP, then the NWP is implemented; otherwise, the SQP becomes the choice. If both policies generate equal benefits, Turkey becomes indifferent between them: either the SQP or the NWP can be selected.¹³ It sounds like a truism that those foreign-policy choices representing higher benefits are implemented. A critical threshold implied by the calculus qualifies this assertion.

The critical threshold is a ratio of the sum of the SQP benefit and the cost of the NWP to the sum of the gain and the cost of the NWP. The decision calculus implies that if the probability of NWP gain exceeds the threshold, then the NWP is preferable. If the probability is equal to the threshold, Turkey remains indifferent with respect to both; each policy can be implemented. And, finally, if the probability takes a value below the threshold, the SQP becomes the choice, not the NWP. Hence, the game implies that the subjective estimates of achieving the NWP gain can become decisive for the shift, not the magnitudes of NWP gain and cost.

We obtain five cases depending upon variations in the threshold. First, the threshold is negative if the SQP loss exceeds the NWP cost. All probabilities of NWP gain, even the probability of zero, satisfy the condition of NWP implementation.¹⁴ Second, the threshold is equal to zero if SQP loss is equal to the

¹³ In technical terms, the equality implies that the value of the NWP gamble constitutes a measure of the sure thing, the SQP benefit.

¹⁴ All probabilities vary between the maximum value of one and the minimum value of zero.

NWP cost. Again, all probabilities, except the probability of zero, satisfy the condition of NWP implementation. If the probability is equal to zero, then Turkey is indifferent between both policies: either the SQP or the NWP can be preferred.

The third and the fourth cases stipulate that the SQP benefit is equal to or exceeds the gain of the NWP. The threshold then respectively becomes equal to or higher than one. However, these conditions are impossible to obtain under the assumption of the NWP gain being higher than that of the SQP. Therefore, a reversal to the SQP is ruled out: it is impossible for the SQP benefit to exceed or even be equal to the NWP gain. The fifth case does not rule out the reversal, however.

The fifth case demonstrates how important can become the subjective estimate of achieving gains under the NWP. If the NWP gain exceeds the SQP benefit and the NWP cost exceeds the SQP loss, the threshold takes values between one and zero. The NWP gain always exceeds the SQP benefit by assumption. Thus, if the NWP generates a cost exceeding the SQP loss, we obtain two feasibility intervals for the NWP and the SQP. If the probability of NWP gain exceeds the threshold, the shift from the SQP to the NWP occurs; otherwise, the SQP remains to be the choice. As a result, NWP does not constitute an irreversible move, even though it generates a higher gain and is less costly than the SQP. If the probability is equal to the threshold, both choices become possible; the AKP elite become indifferent between the NWP and the SQP.¹⁵

Game 2

The game 2 relaxes the assumption of the SQP containing no risks. The game treats both the SQP and the NWP as risky prospects. The assumption leads to two general classes of deductions.

First, if the probability of SQP gain is below a specific bound, the NWP generates higher payoffs than the SQP even if the likelihood of the NWP gain is equal to zero.¹⁶ The NWP then becomes the choice. Otherwise, if the likelihood of SQP gain is above the bound and the probability of NWP gain is sufficiently small, Turkey reverts to the SQP, even though it is costlier and less rewarding compared with the NWP.

Second, the NWP becomes the unique choice provided that the probability of NWP gain remains higher than a threshold.¹⁷ Even the certainty of reaping rewards of the SQP does not prevent the shift under this condition. Conversely, if the probability of NWP gain is smaller than the threshold, the SQP can be implemented for sufficiently high likelihoods of benefiting from the SQP.

Hence, there exist thresholds that indicate when the comparisons of subjective estimates of achieving gains under the NWP and the SQP matter for the implementation of the SQP and the NWP. For example, suppose that the SQP gain occurs with a probability higher than a threshold and that the SQP is the rational choice.¹⁸ One would expect no deviation from the SQP to the NWP. However, if the probability of NWP gain gets higher, that is, if the subjective estimate of reaping gains from the NWP increases progressively, then Turkey becomes indifferent between the two policies at some point and the NWP starts to produce a higher expected payoff. Accordingly, the shift from the SQP to the NWP occurs.

In contrast, if, for example, the subjective estimate of obtaining rewards from the SQP is positive but lower than the threshold, so that the NWP is the

¹⁵ The Figure 1 in the Appendix displays the conditions of the fifth case.

¹⁶ The Figure 2 in the Appendix displays the bound: it is the q -intercept with the coordinates of $(0, \frac{G_2 - C_1}{G_2 + G_1})$.

¹⁷ The threshold is $(\frac{G_2 + C_1}{G_1 + G_2}, 1)$ in this case.

¹⁸ This threshold is the q -intercept.

choice, and the AKP leadership evaluates that the probability of benefiting from the SQP progressively increases, Turkey becomes indifferent at some point, while the SQP becomes more beneficial as the probability of SQP gain gets higher. Consequently, the NWP is not necessarily a rational choice even if beliefs and reactions to old policies constitute a worldview representing the NWP reward as exceeding the one of the SQP and the SQP cost as higher than the one of the NWP.

Discussion

The first case of the game implies that as long as the SQP loss exceeds the NWP gain, the AKP leadership should not bother about evaluating whether it will be possible to reap any gains from the NWP. The leadership might even evaluate as it is impossible to achieve any gains through the NWP; yet they would still prefer to get rid of the SQP. The cost of the NWP should not either matter for the leadership's choice of the NWP. The risky NWP is preferred to risk-free SQP. Thus, the implementation of the NWP does not only depend on the NWP gain but also on how attractive is the SQP.

In fact, the first game enables us to comment on the risk attitude of the AKP elite. Huth, Bennett, and Gelpi argue that decision makers are risk averse if they avoid choices with unknown probabilities in favor of those with known ones; they are risk takers otherwise (1992:488–491). The first and the second cases of the first game illustrate how risk taker can become the AKP leadership in conducting foreign policy. The first game takes the SQP as producing a constant benefit by certainty unlike the NWP. Thus, any preference in favor of the NWP constitutes a risk-taker behavior. The implication is striking: even if the leadership evaluate that it is impossible to reap any rewards from the NWP, they implement it (or become indifferent with respect to both the NWP and the SQP). The finding has implications for the qualification of the AKP elite as “neo-Ottomans.”

The interpretation of the NWP as a neo-Ottoman foreign-policy effort requires cognitive and normative components that would subjectively vary. A fear of Turks or Islam or both, or an expectation that Turks would naturally restore their diplomatic weight in old Ottoman territories can generate such judgments. If neo-Ottomanism were only a description, a definition would not be necessary indeed. However, if the term is meant to explain the NWP, then it must be defined precisely. If the NWP were defined as neo-Ottomanism, then it could be used for explanatory purposes.¹⁹ In this case, both games reveal conditions of neo-Ottomanism and a reversal to the SQP. Thus, the perception of the NWP as “neo-Ottomanism” does not do justice to the evaluation of foreign policies on the basis of gains and costs they generate.

Davutoğlu maintains that the SQP does not fully tap into Turkey's imperial past; it is static and risk-free without allowing for any changes in foreign-policy direction. It also constrains Turkey power resources to a great extent. A unidirectional foreign-policy orientation is not suitable for Turkey, as the country is located in major geopolitical crossroads and possesses a rich set of historical experiences (Davutoğlu 2001, 60–93). However, if the NWP proves progressively to be costly, Turkey can revert back to the SQP as the fifth case of first game demonstrates. Such a sharp turn should not therefore be a puzzling move. Therefore, one might not expect that the NWP constitutes an irreversible enterprise as long as AKP remains in power.

The probability of NWP gain represents the AKP leaders' subjective estimate of reaping the reward the NWP produces. Thus, it is also a measure of the

¹⁹ See Wagner (1993) for descriptive and analytic uses of the concept of bipolarity, for example.

leaders' confidence about the success of the NWP. The second game reveals that the NWP will last for any fluctuations in the leaders' confidence as long as the AKP elites assess that the likelihood of the SQP gain is sufficiently low. The same result holds even if the elites are certain about the SQP gain, yet their confidence in the NWP success is sufficiently high. To illustrate, the recent diplomatic moves of Turkey toward Serbia (and also Greece) could hint at high expectations from the NWP. Turkey organized a summit in Istanbul uniting Bosnian, Serbian, and Turkish Presidents Haris Sladzic, Boris Tadic, and Abdullah Gül, respectively, in April this year. The Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, visited Srebrenica later in July to commemorate the massacre of 8,000 Muslim Bosnians by Serbs in 1995. He was accompanied again by the President of Serbia, and the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Hence, the leadership is moving fast in trying to leave such atrocities behind and in concentrating in joint economic and educational enterprises in Balkans.²⁰

The NWP should indeed be evaluated by the AKP elites as not only representing a considerable gain through Turkey's actual rhythmic diplomacy but also as a reward quite possible to realize. In other words, the leaders' confidence about the NWP remains high. An array of factors could be the sources of this confidence such as the AKP leaders' evaluations of successes under the NWP and comparisons between achievements under the SQP and NWP. The games demonstrate that even if the leaders have no confidence, foreign-policy observers and analysts could still witness Turkey's diplomatic attacks in its neighborhood and in the globe.

Conclusion

Turkey's new foreign-policy orientation can be explained by changes in the Turkish elite whose views are radically different than those of previous decision makers. Nevertheless, a preference change putting more value on good neighborly relations and cooperation is not a sufficient condition for changes in Turkish foreign policy. The probabilities of gains and costs of both types of policies point out to more intricate relations.

Consequently, if the old status quo policies certainly lead to a high payoff but the new policy orientation contains risks, then the likelihood of NWP benefit must exceed a certain limit. The limit depends upon gains and costs of both types of policies. If both types of policies are risky prospects, then relations between likelihoods of gains and therefore costs generate explanations of the NWP. If payoff parameters do not change but the probabilities of gains and costs do, there should be no surprise to observe deviations to the SQP even under the same preferences of the current Turkish leadership.

The usefulness of the model and its implications can be further investigated through various assumptions about magnitudes of gains and costs of both foreign-policy orientations. It is also possible to introduce strategic uncertainty, that is, the supposition that strategies of Turkey and other states depend on each other implying games. The building of game models requires the justification of additional assumptions, however.

Foreign policy analysis should at least have these two qualities. Obviously, no one would be convinced that AKP leaders are using probabilities, expected values, and some little algebra when they decide for foreign policy. The two games use such tools to discipline arguments by making them transparent and reproducible (Powell 1999).

²⁰ "La Turquie de retour dans les Balkans," *Le Figaro*, September 10, 2010.

Appendix

Game 1

The expectation from the NWP is:

$$E(NWP) = p(G_1) + (1 - p)(-C_1) = p(G_1) - (1 - p)(C_1)$$

where G_1 denotes the gain, C_1 denotes the cost, p denotes the probability of NWP gain, and $(1-p)$ denotes the probability of NWP cost. Similarly, the expectation from the SQP is:

$$E(SQP) = B = G_2 - C_2$$

where B denotes the SQP benefit, and G_2 and C_2 are the SQP gain and the cost, respectively. The SQP loss is the inverse of the SQP benefit:

$$-B = C_2 - G_2$$

All parameters are assumed to be non-negative: $G_1, G_2, C_1, C_2 \geq 0$. The parameters are further assumed to satisfy the conditions of $G_1 > G_2$ and $C_2 > C_1$.

If $E(NWP) > E(SQP)$, then Turkey implements NWP; otherwise, if $E(NWP) < E(SQP)$, Turkey implements SQP. If $E(NWP) = E(SQP)$, Turkey becomes indifferent between the two policies. Consequently, if $E(NWP) > E(SQP)$, therefore $p > \frac{C_2 - C_2 + C_1}{G_1 + C_1}$, NWP is chosen. Otherwise, if $p < \frac{C_2 - C_2 + C_1}{G_1 + C_1}$, SQP is chosen. Turkey becomes indifferent between the two policies if $p = \frac{C_2 - C_2 + C_1}{G_1 + C_1}$.

Let α denote the threshold $\frac{C_2 - C_2 + C_1}{G_1 + C_1}$. The threshold α varies under different parameter values. It increases when G_2 or C_1 or both increase, or if G_1 or C_2 or both decrease. It decreases when G_2 or C_1 or both decrease, or if G_1 or C_2 or both increase.

Case 1 $C_2 - G_2 > C_1$ implies that $\alpha < 0$.

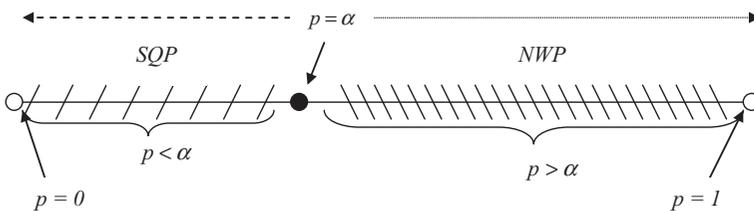
Case 2 $C_2 - G_2 = C_1$ implies that $\alpha = 0$.

Case 3 $G_2 - C_2 = G_1$ implies that $\alpha = 1$.

Case 4 $G_2 - C_2 > G_1$ implies that $\alpha > 1$.

Case 5 $G_1 > G_2 - C_2$ and $C_1 > C_2 - G_2$ imply that $0 < \alpha < 1$.

All $p \geq 0$ satisfy the condition of $p > \alpha$ in the first case. Similarly, all $p > 0$ satisfy the condition in the second case; if $p = 0$, then there is indifference between the SQP and the NWP. The third and the fourth cases are impossible under the assumption of $G_1 > G_2$. In the fifth case, the condition $G_1 > G_2 - C_2$ always holds as by assumption. Hence, it is sufficient that $C_1 > C_2 - G_2$ holds for the existence of intervals where SQP and NWP become rational as illustrated by the figure below:



Game 2

The expectation from the NWP is:

$$E(NWP) = p(G_1) - (1 - p)(C_1)$$

The expectation from the SQP is:

$$E(SQP) = q(G_2) - (1 - q)(C_2),$$

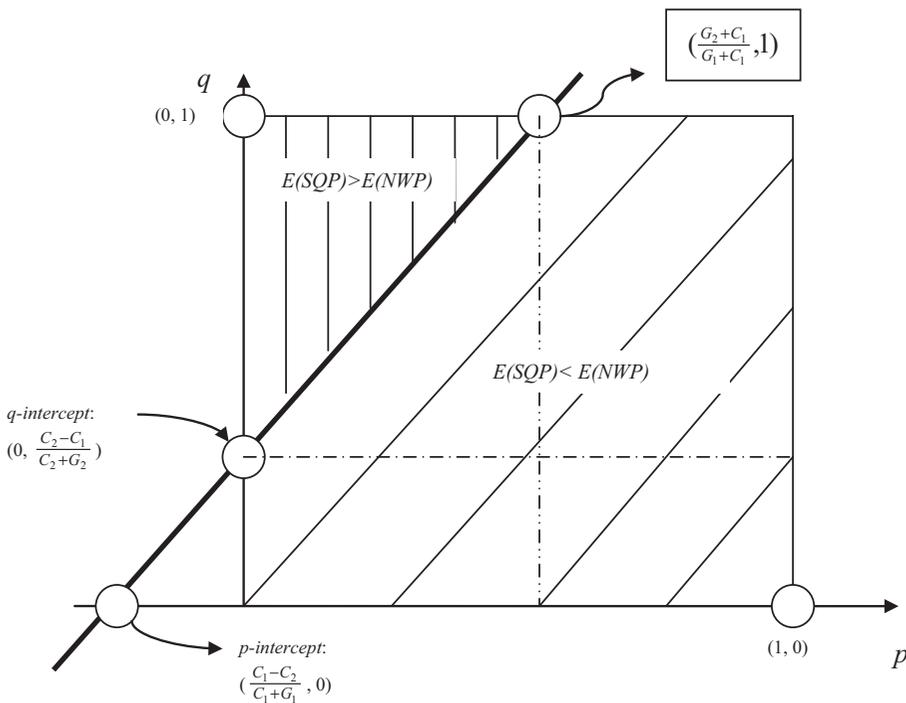
where q denotes the probability of SQP gain, and $(1-q)$, the probability of SQP cost.

The condition $E(NWP) > E(SQP)$ is satisfied if $p(G_1 + C_1) - q(G_2 + C_2) > C_1 - C_2$. If $p(G_1 + C_1) - q(G_2 + C_2) < C_1 - C_2$, then $E(NWP) < E(SQP)$, and SQP will be preferred over NWP. Similarly, if $p(G_1 + C_1) - q(G_2 + C_2) = C_1 - C_2$, AKP elites expect the same benefit from the two policies, they become indifferent between them.

The line of $p(G_1 + C_1) - q(G_2 + C_2) = C_1 - C_2$ indicates the indifference condition. Turkey is indifferent between the SQP and the NWP for all probabilities of p and q given values of gain and cost parameters. Remark that the slope-intercept form of the line can be written as $q = p\left(\frac{G_1+C_1}{G_2+C_2}\right) + \left(\frac{C_2-C_1}{G_2+C_2}\right)$. The line bisects the p - q plane and implies regions where NWP and SQP become rational.

The coordinates of the p - and the q -intercepts (that is, the intersection of the indifference line with p and q axes, respectively) of the line are $p = \frac{C_1-C_2}{C_1+C_1}$, $q = 0$ and $q = \frac{C_2-C_1}{C_2+C_2}$, $p = 0$. The denominators of the intercepts are always positive by assumption; therefore, their signs depend upon the relationship between C_1 and C_2 . It is assumed that $C_1 < C_2$, and therefore p -intercept is negative but q -intercept is positive (the Figure 2 below).

The boldfaced indifference line has a positive slope. Remark that the point $\left(\frac{G_2+C_1}{G_1+C_1}, 1\right)$ constitutes the threshold for p such that the NWP becomes the only choice for any q . If p is smaller than this threshold, then the SQP can be implemented for sufficiently high values of q . Similarly, if q is smaller than the q -intercept $\frac{C_2-C_1}{C_2+C_2}$, then the NWP becomes the only choice for any positive value of p .



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